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guished merchant, John Swanwick, who placed them in the charge of my father, who had just built a Gallery, the first in America, for the display of Paintings. These pictures occupied two walls of the room, and consisted of a great variety of subjects, such as are usual in Italy for altar pieces. As soon as I was released from school, I rushed to the Gallery, devouring with my whole and earnest attention, the wonders of the Beautiful Art, without a guide except the silent practice of my father in ordinary Portrait Painting. I had then never heard or read of Venetian coloring, but a group of females, by a Venetian painter, was spontaneously my daily admiration and wonder, even before I had touched a brush, as it has since been my ambition to emulate. The very smell of the room, from the quantity of mastic varnish, associated as it was with these pictures, was an enjoyment beyond the perfume of flowers; and I was vexed to feel hungry, and be called away to my dinner—indeed, at a later period, when engrossed in the study of Painting, I grieved that I could not live without eating, and the loss of so much precious daylight: it is not surprising, therefore, that I objected to teach an urchin who loved eating more than his pencil. The students of Art at Rome breakfast at eight in the morning, and dine at eight in the evening.

At this time (1786) we had no such thing as an artist's color shop. What colors could be had were found at the apothecary's, unless expressly sent for to London; nor was there a gilder of frames in Philadelphia, then the capital of the States, until 1793, when my father kept a poor Frenchman from starving, by giving him employment, and afterwards recommending him to Mr. Stuart. No gold-beaters found employment here, and others, besides Quakers, were content with mahogany frames to their little looking-glasses: no such thing as a print-shop was to be found, and it was seldom that a decent engraving could be seen in the window of a bookstore. A collection of magnificent engravings was sent over by *Boydell* to the charge of Mr. PINE, an English Portrait and Historical Painter, who was known in London as a pupil of Reynolds. Our great banker, Robert Morris, had built him a spacious mansion, with a painting-room, in which Washington sat to him for his portrait, now in the possession of the Brevoort family; and an exhibition-room, in which were displayed his copies of several Paintings, by Reynolds—among them that of Mrs. Siddons, as the Tragic Muse. It was here that Boydell's English and German prints were exposed to public view, without charge, and visited by the *élite* of our Quaker city; but not a print was sold, and the whole collection was sent back to London,—anticipating the fate of Pine himself, who was not appreciated as he thought he deserved to be, having left London in disgust, because the Royal Academicians had not elected him their president.

Then I only knew one other young man as a student of painting, Jeremiah Paul, the son of a Quaker schoolmaster; his genius was much admired by many young men of more money than brains, who displayed their taste by inviting him to suppers, where frequent intoxication soon destroyed his talent and his life.

The Swanwick collection of Paintings, at my father's, found no purchasers at private sale, and they were finally sold by auction, and scattered, heaven knows where. Mr. Swanwick bought 130 of them, which he employed me to clean, as well as I knew how, and to varnish—all but one, that was so much cracked, the paint falling off in scales, that I retained it to experiment with, and succeeded in reattaching the scales, but had to *repaint* the entire neck and other parts. It was a Madonna, and was stolen from me. A New York collector of Oil Paintings visited me, some time after, with three pictures which he found in our neighborhood. I instantly recognized one of them as my Madonna, and told him its history, of which he took no heed. Some years after, he surprised me by showing me the same picture, further repaired, elegantly framed, with a plate glass over it, to protect from injury "the only authentic and uninjured Guido in the country." I did not care to mortify him by renewing my claims, at least to the neck, which he pronounced the most beautiful of Guido's work. Such things are well known to artists, who now rejoice that a better taste prevails, not only in England but America, in the encouragement of living talent, and more authentic Guidos.

I again refer to those times, when only a few miserable sign painters scarcely claimed the title of artists; whereas now, every village can boast of some genius; and excellent native painters are even more numerous than the foreign singers, who, by their melodious noise, bear away from them the prize and the pay. Europe, however, is more just to American talent, both in Painting and Sculpture. When I was painting the portrait of the celebrated DAVIN, he asked me, why it was that *all* the best Painters in London were Americans? I replied, "not all." He added, "West, Copley, Trumbull, Allston." I told him that I thought many American artists succeed, because of the *difficulties* they have to encounter. "How so, when our Napoleon Gallery is to concentrate every facility to artists?" I told him, my opinion was that the American, strongly excited by all that he read of European talent and excellence, exerts every means to reach the European seats of Arts, and having but little time and money to spend, studies with his whole soul, and therefore outstrips his more indolent and luxurious fellow students; and afterwards being visited by literary travellers, they distinguish themselves by lavish expenditures of patriotic praise.

REMBRANDT PEALE.

Correspondence.

PARIS, Dec. 15, 1854.

WINTER, which poets and landscapists have so much stigmatized, has one merit notwithstanding—it makes Paris teem with life and activity. Must we not get up fêtes and create amusements evening after evening for the fashionable and charming society which the late autumn excursions and lingering leisure of the country may have overwearied? Thus, when December comes, when belated travellers are again back in the great city, Paris grows feverish, and

everywhere is visible an idle strife to make both noise and money, in order to attract the sight-seeing crowd. The theatres, above all, contend for the notice and good will of the public; and, not to mention here these common exhibitions, to which intelligent and refined people never learn the way, in our review of the efforts recently made by the Paris theatres, we are only to occupy ourselves with those whose success has a bearing upon dramatic art in its choicest forms of expression. None, in this relation, is more deserving of attention than the *Théâtre Italien*. It is well known that M. le Colonel Ragani, director of this stage, has assembled around him a brilliant circle of artists, and that three times in each week he attracts to his charming entertainments the flower of Parisian fashion. There, by the side of BETTINI, of GASSIER, of GRAZIANI, shines Madame FREZZOLINI—so poetic and so touching when she utters the complaints of Desdemona—Madame GASSIER, who, to Spanish vivacity, adds the musical feeling of an Italian; and, above all, Madame BOSIO, whose delicate tones stream out like rockets in the air, and, like them again, descend in golden rain.

Ottello, *Matilde de Shabray*, *Beatrice di Tenda*, *Il Barbiere*, *Semiramide*, have thus far sufficed for the representations of Colonel Ragani, and, notwithstanding that the frequenters of the theatre still continue to applaud these charming works, he has had the good sense to add to his *répertoire* Verdi's *Ernani*. Although this opera has been in existence ten years (for it was performed for the first time at Venice in 1844), and although it has been played in Paris seven years, it has, for the most part, for the audience of the *Salle Ventadour*—the attraction of a new production, and one, so to say, eccentric.

By the side of Rossini's music, which is like an eternal dialogue between skylarks and nightingales, the opera of this young maestro seemed to be noisy,—uncouth; and several among the spectators looked at each other with wondering eyes. I heard a remark by my side, to the effect that "the style of Verdi is the very negation of music." One cannot be more grossly deceived, and the end of the third act is alone sufficient to prove, that this clever master, far from being ignorant of the true laws of music, excels in translating through sound, the deepest emotions of the soul.

The performance of *Ernani* was at all events quite brilliant. Bettini, in the part of the outlaw, and Graziani in that of Carlos, were very happy in the rendering of Verdi's production. But to Madame Bosio, especially, the house gave both its flowers and its applause. True, she does not sing with much force, nor does she in her acting, manifest a very great amount of soul, but her voice is so charmingly sweet, and she uses it with so much delicacy and flexibility, that the merits of the singer close the eyes to the shortcomings of the actress—the delightful warbling which flows so easily from her mouth, enchants all who listen to it.

Madame Bosio received no less applause in the *Tre Nozze* of Alary, which was repeated a few days ago, at the *Théâtre Italien*. It is not, it is true, music of a very solid character, but it is lively, graceful, and pleasing, and this opera may well enable us to await patiently the first repre-

sensation of the *Trovatore*, now in active preparation, and which, it is said, will reveal new qualities in JOSEPH VERDI. This work is to serve for the *début* of the tenor BEAUCAUDÉ, yet unknown to Paris, but to whom the Italian journals have awarded a high rank.

The Opera is neither so active nor so fortunate as the *Théâtre Italien*. It is full of courage, but its venturesome boldness does not always succeed. The season commenced indifferently. Madame STOLTZ, announced with much pretension by friendly journals, has not obtained the success anticipated. We have heard her in *La Reine de Chypre* and in *La Favorite*. There is no doubt but Madame STOLTZ is still an impressive tragic actress, but she is no longer the songstress with flexible and youthful voice, who, some years ago, made the fortune of the *Opera*. Her voice has lost much, and at times refuses to convey the inner feeling of the artist; it is like an instrument from which a jealous hand has torn away some of its strings—it is not the will she lacks, it is the power.

La Nonne Sanglante of M. GOUNOD has obtained one of those tolerable successes, which, although gratifying to the composer, is unproductive to the theatre. M. GOUNOD, who made himself known by a lyric drama—*Sappho*—and by the choruses in the tragedy of *Ulysse*, is an earnest musician, who perfectly understands his profession, and who, perhaps, knows it too well, for his memory is stored with well-known rhythmical passages and musical phrases, borrowed from the works of his predecessors. Notwithstanding decided merit and felicitous scoring, the *Nonne Sanglante* has one serious fault, it lacks originality and character; not to know is truly unfortunate, but to know too much is certainly none the less so.

The season at the *Opera* would have been a dull one, had not the director of this theatre attracted the public there by a captivating cantatrice, SOPHIE CRUVELLI. She had already appeared with striking success in the *Huguenots* and *Robert le Diable*, when, one evening, just at the hour when the curtain was about to rise, it was noised about, that, suddenly seized with a strong desire to travel, Mdlle. Cruvelli had left Paris, without advising the management and without letting any one into the secret of her flight. You can imagine the excitement produced by such a sudden departure. For three days, Paris could neither talk nor think of anything but the disappearance of SOPHIE CRUVELLI. A thousand stories in relation to the matter were circulated, as indiscreet as they were false; for in France, when the true cause of any event does not appear, thousands of gossippers are ready with the fancies of their own brain to explain that of which they do not know the first word. We are too much in earnest to repeat all that has been said of this affair. We simply know that MDLLE. CRUVELLI had scarcely crossed the frontier before peace-negotiations were commenced with her; these proceedings have fortunately succeeded—the lovely fugitive has returned, and she has re-appeared at the *Opera* in her best part, that of *Valentine* in the *Huguenots*. The public, wishing to appear angry, received her at first a little coldly, but she had scarcely uttered a few notes when the applause

burst from every part of the house; this re-appearance was a decided triumph.

The return of MDLLE. CRUVELLI is a piece of good fortune for the opera and for the Parisian dilettanti. Thanks to this eminent artist, the theatre of the *Rue Lepelletier* will be able to brave the rigors of winter successfully. With GARDONI, who has appeared again in *La Favorite*, BONNCHÉ, GUEYMARD, and OBIN—with dancers like LA ROSATI and MADAME GUY-STÉPHAN—the opera will be able to furnish us delightful evenings. After all, the most important thing is to renovate the *répertoire*. We are aware that it is the intention of the management to do so. Then, let it bring out Verdi's *Vêpres Siciliennes* as soon as possible, which, it seems, bids fair to obtain from the Parisian public a renewal of its pristine glory.

The history of the *Théâtre Français*, for the last month, has not been less full of events, and all have not been equally fortunate. They commenced by playing *La Niaisie*, a comedy of five acts, by M. Mazères, formerly prefect under Louis-Philippe. In this piece, the idea of which is wholly improbable, and which has nothing racy in its details, the interest centres in a wife whom her husband believes to be witless, but who in reality is found to be the most *spirituelle* person in the world. This comedy, which the author has reduced to four acts without rendering it more amusing, has obtained but a partial success. It does not deserve more, for it belongs to an obsolete class—it speaks a by-gone language, and supports itself with worn-out combinations of false and childish sentiments. If it had been played fifteen years ago, it would have perhaps drawn from another audience the meed of applause which is denied to it now. This poor piece, on the other hand, is extremely well-rendered by GÉFFROY (who performed the character of the husband), and by MDLLE. BROHAN. It is impossible to play the simpleton with more ease and attractiveness.

A few days later, the *Théâtre Français* gave the first representation of a tragedy in one act, called *Rosemonde*, written by M. Latour de St. Ybars. The poet borrowed his subject from the forgotten annals of a barbarian people, but it is not in keeping with the spirit of such savage heroes. The piece is without interest, without passion, without terror. The part of *Rosemonde*, played by MDLLE. RACHEL, and expressly written for her, contains simply a few dramatic effects. Evidently indisposed the first day, this great actress did not produce the sensation that she aimed to produce, but in following representations she recovered all her energy and all her power. It should be remembered, too, that the most intelligent interpreter cannot give character to common-place poetry, cannot throw fire into cold verses, or render buoyant and animated a heavy and feeble literature. M. Latour de St. Ybars writes like a pupil in rhetoric, with words spun out without point, and with sentiments taken from classical selections, instead of drawing upon his own heart. Is it not a pity to see a noble tragic actress wasting her time and energies upon works of such pretentious vulgarity?

But let us leave the theatres, and say a word about the works now under way in

the studios of our artists. You may imagine that painters and sculptors have but one thought on their minds—the Great Exhibition for 1855. Thus, each one labors vigorously, and for fear of not being in time, not a day nor an hour is lost. The sculptor, OLÉINGER is engaged upon the equestrian statue of Francis I. BARYE, JOUFFROY, SMART and DUBET, will contribute also important figures. Among the painters, it is already known that CHAS. SÉRIAN will send "The Defence of Orléans"; MÜLLER, "The Battle of Chalons," and EUGÈNE DELACROIX several compositions of a very dramatic sentiment and powerful coloring. We know also that the events now occurring in the East have proved a stimulus to artist-talent; the vendors of prints are already overburdened with lithographs and engravings, representing the most insignificant episodes of the campaign in the Crimea. The Government itself is in the same line, and has commissioned EUGÈNE LAMI to paint "The Battle of Alma." We believe we can say beforehand, that if it be not a great picture, it will be at least a spirited composition. It is not as yet known whether the great military painter of the age, HORACE VERNET, will send one of his works to the Exhibition. At all events he will not be able to say that he had not time enough—he who ordinarily paints a battle before it could have been won.

The Préfet de la Seine still continues to decorate the Hotel de Ville, where, during the winter, it is intended to have some magnificent fêtes. Whilst the ceiling, by LÉON COENIG, in the Hall of the Zodiac, is being prepared, the decoration of a small gallery has been entrusted to younger artists—Messrs. BELLEL, EDMOND HEDOUIN, PAUL FLANDRIN, DESGOFTE and LECOMTE, have been commissioned to cover its naked walls with immense landscapes, in which are to be represented the most picturesque localities in the neighborhood of Paris. These works are to be completed by the 15th January. We shall have something to say of them when they are finished.

In one of its last sittings, the Academy of Fine Arts elected a foreign associate in place of the engraver PAOLO TOSCHI, recently deceased at Parma. Toschi who has been a member since 1832, was a skillful artist, and several of his plates, among them the Engraving of the *Spasimo*, from Raphael, have enjoyed a great reputation in Italy and in France. His successor elected by the Academy is the engraver FELSING, of Darmstadt.

There are still several items of news, but they are undeveloped as yet. We shall wait until they grow to importance, and send them to you by our next dispatch. At all events you can be certain beforehand that there will be no lack of materials for gossip. The intellectual and dramatic life of Paris is so prodigiously active, that it certainly overflows with events, ideas, novelties, and racy incidents. We shall be alive to every rumor from the studio or the green-room. Nothing of importance that may take place in the world of Art shall escape, we hope, our insatiable curiosity; and such is our desire to know all and tell all, that while giving you the events of the evening, we shall follow it closely as possible with those of the succeeding day.

P. MANTZ.